

We claim:

1. A method for identifying users over a network, the method comprising:
 receiving a message from a first user, the message identifying at least one message recipient; and
 providing the message to the at least one message recipient, wherein when the message is provided to the at least one message recipient, the first user's sound ID is played for the at least one message recipient upon delivery of the message to the at least one message recipient, the sound ID having been previously selected by the first user for identifying the first user to the at least one message recipient.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the message received from the first user is an instant messaging communication. ✓

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the message received from the first user is an activity status message.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the message provided to the at least one message recipient is an activity alert sound.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the activity alert sound alerts the at least one message recipient that the first user has become active on at least one client device.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the sound ID is a snippet of notes.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the sound ID is at least a portion of a popular song.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the message to the at least one message recipient comprises playing the first user's sound ID followed by the message, the message being a text instant message.

1 9. A method for facilitating identification of users in a network, the method comprising:
 2 receiving a plurality of audible signature selections from a plurality of users in the
 3 network, each user selecting a unique audible signature to identify themselves to the other users
 4 in the network; and *"personal sound identifier"*
 5 distributing communications between the plurality of users in the network, wherein each
 6 communication is accompanied by the unique audible signature of the user which initiated the
 7 communication so as to identify that user to the one or more users who are receiving the
 8 communication.

1 / 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the unique audible signature is a portion of a song
 2 recognized by the receiving users as identifying the initiating user.
 3

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the users receiving the message is played the audible
 2 signature of the user which initiated the communication followed by the playing of the actual
 3 communication.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the communication is an activity status update.
 2

1 13. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
 2 providing a selection of audible signatures for selection by the plurality of users.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein two or more of the plurality of users are prevented from
 2 selecting the same audible signature.
 3

1 / 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the audible signature is preceded by an activity signal,
 2 the activity signal based upon the activity level of the initiating user.
 3

1 16. A method for providing audible identification of users in a communications network, the
 2 method comprising:
 3 providing a selection facility for receiving user selections of audible sound identifiers, the
 4 audible sound identifiers uniquely identifying the selecting user to other users in the
 5 communications network; and
 6 identifying the users to one another in the communication network, wherein identifying
 7 the users to one another comprises providing the users' selected audible sound identifiers to one
 8 another in the course of communications between the users such that each user is identified to the
 9 other by the sound of their respective audible sound identifier.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the selection facility comprises a plurality of audible
 2 sound identifiers organized into categories.

3 18. The method of claim 16, wherein users are allowed to create their own audible sound
 4 identifiers for inclusion in the selection facility.

5 19. The method of claim 16, wherein the audible sound identifiers are not re-played for user
 6 during repetitive communications between the users.

7 20. The method of claim 16, further comprising:
 8 distributing the selected audible sound identifier corresponding to one user to the other
 9 users in the communications network.